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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Putin of Russia (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Putin

Interpreter: Dimitry Zarechnak
Notetakers: Clarence Johnson, Marco Broz,
and Chris LeGrand

DATE, TIME: October 24, 2002, 7:32 - 7:41 a.m., EDT
AND PLACE: Situation Room

The President: Vladimir? (U)

President Putin: Yes sir. (U)

The President: Yes. I'm calling to express my deep concern for the people of your country and just to let you know that if you need any help we would like to offer it in any way possible. I know this is a terrible situation, and I know you can handle it. I also wanted to let you know that I lend my support, friend-to-friend, and that is why I'm calling. (S)

President Putin: Yes. This is a very important call for me, George, and I thank you for it. I am thankful to you and grateful to your people for the understanding and concern. About 700 people have been taken hostage and the terrorists number between 35 and 45. That is an approximate figure, and they are armed and they have high explosives on them, mines. It's a very grave and very complicated situation. There are over 60 foreigners there among the hostages. There may be a few American citizens there among them. We are taking this into account. We have this in mind and we are doing our best in order to ensure the safety of the people. We shall take no action, however, to promote another turn of terrorism either in Russia, or throughout the world. I'm viewing this as an another link in the chain of terrorism throughout the world. And, we are also observing that the telephone traffic between the terrorists in the theater and Chechnya, Turkey, the Gulf States, and Arab countries is going up and down. The initial information of what is supposed to

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Classified by: Stephen Biegun

Reason: 1.5(d)

Declassify on: 10/24/12

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happen and is happening has in fact come from their accomplices in those Arab countries. So, this is absolute proof that these terrorist acts are hatched in the same centers against you and us. And, I would like to confirm our position that we are prepared to cooperate in any way to combat the terrorist acts. George, I would like to beg your pardon that we are not going to meet because I have to delay my departure to Mexico. (S)

The President: I completely understand, Vladimir. (U)

President Putin: Thank you, George. Thank you. (U)

The President: We can talk on the phone any time, and I will see you on my next trip to Europe. At any rate, I will see you. (S)

President Putin: I was told by my people that your people and my people have agreed that we will be meeting in St. Petersburg. If you could look at your schedule the 24th would be good. If not, if it doesn't suit you, I wonder if we can find some other time, but the 24th would be good. (S)

The President: The 24th? I will look at that. I know we are planning on coming to St. Petersburg. (S)

President Putin: There is a very nice place near St. Petersburg, in the suburb, not actually in St. Petersburg. A place where they have a palace complex. It is a very nice place to meet. Last, but not least, I would like to cooperate on this particular terrorist attack. I will instruct my special services to take up your offer and contact the U.S. side. Perhaps, I believe that U.S. experts could be a help in this situation and provide additional information. Thanks a lot for receiving my wife and for the welcome you extended to her. (S)

The President: Oh, she was great. Okay Vladimir, thank you. (U)

President Putin: Thank you, George. (U)

The President: We'll get back on the dates. I know we are planning on coming to St. Petersburg. Our people are working on the dates, and your wife was fantastic. (S)

President Putin: Thank you, George. (U)

The President: Okay Vladimir, good luck. I know you can handle it. (S)

President Putin: Thank you, George. All the best. (U)

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(The President: Alright sir. (U)

President Putin: Good-bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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